

STURGEON SUMMERS

STORY **WALTER FRANCZYK** | PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

Setting foot in her new family cottage is like coming home to a warm embrace, says Lucia Kaminskas. “It’s like a really big hug,” says the retired school teacher.

She and her husband, Al, a benefits consultant, built their six-bedroom Sturgeon Lake retreat on a waterfront cottage property, originally bought by Al’s father about 40 years ago. It’s a place where they spent many happy times. “We basically raised our children up here in the summers,” says Al. “My wife was a teacher, so she’d come up at the end of school with all three kids and spend the summer up here. They grew up here,” he says. “Their best memories, their fondest memories are the cottage.”

Al and his sister Renata bought the family cottage from their father. Their families shared it until Renata built a new home on nearby Pigeon Lake. That’s when Al and Lucia bought Renata’s share of the property and embarked on a new future for their summering spot.

Building a new cottage was a family decision, Al says. They had a dinner and meeting with their children, twin daughters Anna and Ramona, and son Vytas. The project would mean Al would retire a little later. “But we, as a family, decided that’s the legacy we want for our children,” he says. “All three children jumped at the opportunity.” *Continued on page 40*



SCF Countertops supplied polished granite for the counters and island dining bar in the kitchen, a favourite gathering spot for the owners’ family and guests. Delicious food and warm hospitality are hallmarks of Al and Lucia Kaminskas’ Kawartha cottage. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** Lucia and Al with their outdoor-loving poodle Skyler have enjoyed many summers on Sturgeon Lake. **BOTTOM:** The new log home was built 150 feet from the lake, creating a gently sloping front yard. The new cottage can sleep 20 people.



ABOVE: A stone-clad, wood-burning fireplace in the great room lends a rustic look to the living space. **RIGHT:** Al enjoys smoking the occasional aromatic cigar. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** **LEFT:** Leading to the second-floor loft, finely-finished hickory stairs match the engineered hardwood flooring. **TOP RIGHT:** Large windows alongside the dinner table provide diners a great view of the lake. **BOTTOM:** White pine walls and ceiling embrace the dormer window seat in the second-floor loft.

In preparation for their new lake house, the Kaminskis bought the lot next door, doubling their water frontage to 200 feet and establishing a wide lake view. They took a year to decide what kind of lake home they wanted. They went to cottage shows and investigated builders on the Internet before choosing **1867 Confederation Log & Timber Frame** to design and manufacture their new home.

“We wanted something rustic,” says Al. Something to suit the lake’s beautiful surroundings, a legacy for their children that would stand for a 100 years. Confederation’s performance was exceptional, he says. During a year-long process, the company went through 16 different designs with the family. “I can’t say enough nice things about them and their patience in designing the home and going back and forth about the changes we wanted,” says Al. “I could only say good things about them.”

They designed the 3,200 sq. ft. foot home with six bedrooms, all equal in size, three bathrooms, a loft and a large open kitchen, dining space and great room. They built the cottage so that Al and Lucia could live comfortably on the first floor without climbing or descending stairs. “So the liquor cabinet is on the first floor,” Al smiles. **Design Alternatives** owner **Greg Lawson** collaborated closely with Confederation and erected the cottage with phenomenal, meticulous workmanship, says Al. He praised



project manager **Keith Armstrong**, foreman **Lyle Fawcett** and acting foreman **Bob Philpott** for their diligence and attention to detail. “They built this house as if it was their own.”

Sixteen-inch white pine logs, harvested in Northern Ontario, envelope every living space. Tongue-in-groove pine covers the ceilings. Engineered hickory sheathes the floors and matching stairs ascend to the second-floor loft and upstairs bedrooms. “All the wood is so natural and organic,” says Lucia. “It feels warm and cosy.” Cherished tchotchkes from the original cottage are at home in the new house. Vintage light fixtures, salvaged from the old cottage, illuminate some of the new spaces, augmented with modern sconces, pendants and lighting from **Lighting Interiors & More**.

Situated at one end of the main-floor living space, the kitchen, by **Kitchen Design Studios**, is integral to family get-togethers. The kitchen island and dining bar, topped with granite from **SCF Countertops**, links the kitchen with the dining space and great room. “We all gather in the kitchen, where everybody does, here and in the main room,” says Lucia. Whether playing a board game or cribbage, watching TV or a crackling fire, reading a book or making a sandwich, family members congregate here. “It can get pretty rowdy and pretty noisy,” she says. **Peterborough Appliances** furnished the kitchen with culinary equipment.

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home & builder

Outside, a timber frame porte cochère shelters guests, relatives and deliveries arriving at the main door. On two sides of the cottage, a wide, covered deck overlooks the lake. “The deck is great because when it’s pouring rain and the wind is coming from the north or south, it doesn’t matter, you can find a dry spot on the deck where you can sit and read a magazine or play with the grandchildren,” Al says. “The deck is one of the features we designed and thoroughly enjoyed over the last few months.”

The family built their new cottage 150 feet from the lake to create a large, grassed front yard where they can play badminton, horseshoes or bocce. At the foot of the property, a long dock provides moorage for a power boat for water skiing and Al’s fishing boat. “I’m a fisherman, so whether it’s ice or snow or water, I don’t care, there’s definitely

a way to fish,” he says. “If I was retired tomorrow, I’d be fishing every day.” Lucia says she loves the cottage, day and night, in winter and summer. “The kids are here almost every weekend, whether we’re here or not,” she says. “And it’s not just to come and vacation, they take on jobs, they like to work and always leave the place the way it was when they came up.” It’s cottage etiquette they perfected when the family shared the old cottage with Al’s sister and her family.

Although their Kawartha cottage would be a great place to retire, Al and Lucia expect to always keep their home in Toronto, where they regularly visit her mother and his father. Their two young grandchildren live just 15 minutes away in the city and Lucia often looks after them. But, Al says, they’ll definitely be spending more than the better part of every week up north, year-round. **OH**



Skyler makes himself at home in a main-floor bedroom where light sconces saved from the family’s old High Park home are installed above the bed. The cottage is built with two downstairs bathrooms and one on the second floor.



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